

A smiling woman with dark hair, wearing a dark pinstriped blazer over a light pink top, looking upwards and to the right. The background is a blurred office setting.

STAND OUT

ANSWERS TO EVERYDAY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

by Kathryn Doan, AgCareers.com Director of Global Business Development

INTERVIEWS can often follow the same course, similar questions, similar answers, almost as if the process is scripted.

Employers are used to hearing the same answer, so as a job seeker, you must be original to stand out.

The most common questions asked in interviews include things like: “Tell me a little about yourself.” “What are your weaknesses?” “What are your biggest strengths?” “Why do you want this job at this company?” Standard answers to these questions often follow a similar pattern of candidates talking about their qualifications and relating everything back to work. This may make sense, since it is a job interview after all, but this is not what makes people stand out.

The best way to make a lasting impression at a job interview is to be personable and demonstrate some of your skills within the interview. When asked, “Tell me a little about yourself,” don’t go into your education and work background, because the employer already knows this through your resume.

Instead, talk about yourself as a person, what motivates you, how you work in a team environment, your interests, an interesting fact about your background, and make it conversational rather than robotic. Relay how your interests and motivations will make you an invaluable addition to their team.

Another time to make a good impression is when answering what your strengths and weaknesses are. Most people will talk about their strengths and weaknesses in terms of roles or job responsibilities, which is good to have, but add more about you as a person.

When it comes to strengths, answer in two ways: why you would be a good fit for the position, and why you would be a good fit for the company. For the position, it is good to relate to your job history and hard skills that relate to the role. When it comes to being a fit for the company, talk about how your personality relates to that of the company and what they stand for. By answering this question in both ways, you will send a clear message

to the employer about what makes you a good worker and a good fit for the company’s culture. Take the same approach when discussing weaknesses.

The same logic applies when it comes to answering why you want the position at that company—answer it in two parts. First, talk about how the position relates to your work experience and what skills are transferable. Then discuss what you know about the company and why you want to work with them. By answering a question in two ways, it shows the employer that you were prepared and that you understand the value of soft skills in the workplace.

The main takeaway about impressing in an interview is to not sound scripted, to be yourself, and to be descriptive with your answers. Remember, a lot of companies are looking for a person who has both the hard and soft skills required to do the job as well as someone who will be a good fit within their company culture. **AG**